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**National HIDTA Directors Association****NATIONAL HIDTA DIRECTORS' ASSOCIATION**

Statement by Thomas H. Carr

House Committee of Government Reform and Oversight
Criminal Justice, Drug Control Policy and Human Resources SubcommitteeFiscal Year 2007 Drug Budget and the Byrne Grants, HIDTA, and other Law
Enforcement Programs: "Are we jeopardizing federal, state and local cooperation?"May 23, 2006

Chairman Souder, Ranking Member Cummings, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee: I am honored to appear before you today to discuss the HIDTA directors' concerns with the Administration's FY07 budget proposal that contains unacceptable budget cuts for the Byrne and Justice Assistance Grant programs, and the transfer of the HIDTA Program to the Department of Justice. I come to you with over 35 years of law enforcement experience, including over 21 years of experience in drug law enforcement and policy development. During my career, I worked as a criminal investigator, supervisor, law enforcement administrator, and university faculty member and researcher.

Since its inception in February 1994, I have had the honor of serving as the director of the Washington/Baltimore (W/B) HIDTA. Among my many duties as a HIDTA director, I chaired the committee that developed the HIDTA Performance Management Process (PMP) used nationwide in the HIDTA Program today to measure its efficiency and effectiveness.

On March 10, 2005, when I testified before this subcommittee about the Administration's FY06 budget proposal, you may recall that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) alleged that the HIDTA Program was inefficient and ineffective. I am pleased to see that at least today these offices are not assailing the Program with that flimsily supported charge. Mr. Souder, Mr. Cummings, and members of the Subcommittee, as you well know, the HIDTA Program is one of the most successful government programs in existence today. My fellow directors and I assert that a drug control program that yields a return on investment of \$63 for every program dollar invested, seizes \$10.5 billion in illicit drugs at wholesale value, nearly \$0.5 billion in illegal assets (drug profits), dismantles and disrupts 3,538 drug trafficking

organizations and money laundering organizations, destroys more than 4,500 clandestine laboratories capable of producing a minimum of \$31 million worth of methamphetamine, and apprehends more than 12,000 fugitives, to mention only a few of its many accomplishments over a 12 month span, can hardly be thrown on the ash heap because it is “not demonstrating success.” Indeed, the HIDTA Program should be emulated, not immolated. At this time I would like to provide you with a copy of the *High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Program 2004 Annual Report* for the record. This report details the Program’s marvelous accomplishments for calendar year 2004.

Our 2005 performance results will be published this summer. However, I can tell you in advance that in 2005, the HIDTA Program identified 5,148 drug trafficking organizations and 491 money laundering organizations. Of these, 1,696 were international, 1,516 were multi-state and 2,427 were local in scope. According to our preliminary reports, 457 were involved in CPOT investigations, 429 in RPOT investigations, and 1,185 DTOs were involved in OCDETF investigations. HIDTA initiatives successfully dismantled 950 of these organizations and disrupted 2,333. The HIDTA investigations listed Mexico as the principal source country for the drugs being trafficked on the streets in America. Based on our information, it also appears that the largest, single ethnic group involved in these DTOs is Mexican.

Mr. Souder, Mr. Cummings and members of this Subcommittee, thanks to each of you and your colleagues in the House of Representatives and in the U.S. Senate, the folly of last year’s efforts to cut the HIDTA budget by 57 percent and merge the Program with the Department of Justice’s Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) failed. Nevertheless, and again without consulting any HIDTA directors, ONDCP Director John Walters has proposed the transfer of the HIDTA Program to the Department of Justice. He has also recommended reducing funding from the FY06 level of \$227 million to \$208 million. These proposals were wrong last year, and are no more appropriate this year.

The HIDTA Program is built on the premise that federal, state and local agencies should have an equal voice in managing their individual HDTAs to address regional drug threats. ONDCP’s Office of State and Local Affairs has and continues to provide a neutral yet supportive environment for this Program to flourish. Moving the HIDTA Program from ONDCP to DOJ would create an imbalance of power in each HIDTA. Various DOJ agencies are directly involved in each HIDTA’s executive board, and these agencies annually compete for scarce resources and funds with non-DOJ federal agencies, as well as state and local drug law enforcement organizations. Simply put, ONDCP is better equipped to act as a neutral broker of HIDTA funding than DOJ since the Office does not maintain an enforcement arm, does not have representation on regional HIDTA executive boards, and does not compete for HIDTA funding in any way.

Part of the rationale offered for transferring the HIDTA Program was to provide better coordination with OCDETF. The Washington/Baltimore HIDTA falls within the Middle Atlantic OCDETF Region, one of the nine OCDETF regions. According to OCDETF statistics I have been provided, this region initiated 177 cases between 2003 and 2005. A total of 69 cases were HIDTA cases, which represents 39 percent of the region’s case initiations. Our HIDTA promotes OCDETF training, and in March we co-sponsored the OCDETF Regional Annual

Meeting. I often talk with our OCDETF regional coordinator and our HIDTA provides input for the preparation of the OCDETF annual strategy and threat assessment. I am unable to see how our HIDTA could be any better coordinated with OCDETF by transferring the Program to DOJ. I know from talking with my colleagues that they also work very closely with OCDETF in their HIDTA regions. In fact, combined, the HIDTA Program reported being involved in 1,242 OCDETF cases in 2004 and, as mentioned, referring 1,185 DTOs to OCDETF in 2005.

According to the Administration's rationale, "Efforts to focus the HDTAs on the President's National Drug Control Strategy priority targeting high-level organizations, such as the CPOT List, have been hindered by the practice of funding individual HDTAs at the same level year after year. As a result, the Budget proposes a HIDTA program that will focus funds on regions that are primary national drug distribution or transit zones. This Budget provides this new, better-focused HIDTA program with funding of \$208 million."

However, our data show that in 2004, HDTAs dismantled or disrupted 3,538 DTOs and MLOs. Fifty-five percent of the DTO's and 86 percent of the MLOs were international or multi-state in scope. By the end of 2004, HIDTA initiatives nationwide reported their involvement in 425 CPOT investigations and 393 RPOT investigations. Our preliminary reports show that the HIDTA Program was involved in 457 CPOT and 429 RPOT investigations in 2005. Has the National Drug Control Strategy been hindered by the practice of funding HDTAs at the same level year after year? Absolutely! All indications are that more funding for the HIDTA Program will most likely result in more CPOT and RPOT cases being initiated.

What is clear to all of the HIDTA directors is that the National Drug Control Strategy is not a National Strategy at all. Rather, it has become a Federal Strategy and one lacking in many important areas. The failure to recognize the critical role state and local police play in enforcing our Nation's drug laws and curbing the importation, production, manufacturing, distribution and consumption of illicit drugs has never been more apparent than when the National Strategy permits the elimination of the Byrne and Justice Assistance Grant programs. Similarly, the Safe and Drug Free Schools program is marked for elimination. It was our understanding that the National Drug Control Strategy was supposed to be developed in concert with state and local governments. Obviously, this was not done. There is something seriously wrong with a strategy that does not coordinate federal, state and local resources and seek cooperation at all levels of government.

In closing, I encourage you to delve into the facts and, when you do, I am sure that you will reach the same conclusions you drew last year. The HIDTA Program works best in the Office of National Drug Control Policy, and funding for Byrne and Justice Assistance Grant programs, the Safe and Drug Free Schools program, and the HIDTA Program should be restored.

Mr. Chairman, members of the Subcommittee, on behalf of the National HIDTA Directors' Association, I thank you for this opportunity and look forward to responding to any questions you might have of me.

